GEELONG NATURALIST

MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE GEELONG FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB INC

(Incorporating The GFNC Monthly News)

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COMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER				
3	General Meeting		Clive Minton	"Tundra Ecology"
10	Plant Group		Margaret MacDonald	"Anglesea Flora"
15	Excursion		Anglesea Leaders: Winston Huggins 632 787 Margaret MacDonald	
24	Bird Group	*	Trevor Pescott	"P J Wood - Birds of Geelong 1945-58"
25	Biodiversity Group		Workshop Meeting	
OCTOBER				
1	General Meeting	*	Patrick O'Leary	"Logging: What Are the Threats?"
8	Plant Group	*	Debra Whitall	"Conservation: An American Perspective"
18,19,20	WVFNCA Campout		Casterton	
27	Excursion		Ocean Grove Nature Reserve; 25th Anniversary	
22	Bird Group		Phil de Gueselin	"Rufous Bristlebird Recovery Plan"
23			Biodiversity Group	Workshop Meeting

* CHANGES TO PROGRAM

PLANT GROUP REPORT
. . . Joe Hubbard

"If we do not act now there will be no tomorrow for many of our plants and animals".

This point was made during the discussion on what our attitudes were towards conserving what was left of our plant species.

And how many of these species would be left for the use and pleasure of future generations?

It was acknowledged that we live in a more environmentally aware society but more has to be done in promoting conservation issues.

And how are we to tackle this most urgent of causes?

Education was identified as a critical factor, with children receiving a high priority. (The key players of tomorrow).

Although nothing was resolved, these ideas were talked out. From a pool of members the Club could provide a support service for teachers and children in their study of natural history in the school and local environment.

Local field guides could create interest and inspiration for all ages.

A single sheet production could introduce short walks or drives with key natural features indicated on an easily read map suitable for tourist, school or naturalist.

Richard Mason, a year 12 student, attended the meeting and we were pleased to be able to exchange ideas with him on one of his current assignments. He has to ascertain the status of a group of Snow Gums situated on a roadside reserve at Vickery's Road, Bellbrae, and come up with a conservation plan.

It is certainly heartening to see the education system taking on, and encouraging environmental studies and young people such as Richard prepared to take up the challenge. □

Plant Group. . .

September Meeting

Margaret MacDonald, President of Angair will be our guest speaker.

All club members are invited as Margaret's illustrated talk will serve as an introduction to our club excursion on September 15th Margaret works hard for and has a wide knowledge of the wonderful and abundant natural history features at Anglesea. □

SPRING IN GEELONG
. . . by Joe Hubbard

This month Joe's column has expanded somewhat as he and some of his friends have a centrefold to celebrate the coming of Spring.

Asked what Spring means to them, they have given us all something to think about. Their answers will help you find the many treasures which are waiting for you in our region during this envigorating season.

On your behalf I would like to give special thanks to Joe and his team.

October Meeting . . .

Logging: What are The Threats? Patrick O'Leary.

Patrick, who has a degree in Zoology worked with the Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources where he was involved in studies on the Impact of Timber Harvesting in various forests across Victoria. More recently he has been working with Environment Victoria which has enabled him to pursue his interest in the animals which are being denied suitable habitat by logging. Leadbeater's Possum, which is the only mammal endemic to Victoria and one of Victoria's two faunal emblems is just one of the animals under threat. Why? □

EXCURSION NOTICE
. . . Dick Southcombe

Anglesea, September 15.

Leaders, Margaret MacDonald and Winston Huggins have been checking Salt Creek and Bald Hills tracks and have found some of them so eroded that they have decided not to finalise a particular route until closer to the excursion day.

As the Marshy Creek area and the heathlands - illustrated on the front of Mary White's book - behind the power station are favoured sites, we will meet our two leaders at the Great Ocean Road / Forest Road intersection and from there be guided to one or two of Anglesea's top spots.

Please assemble at Karingal at 8.50 for a 9am sharp departure or meet at Forest Road at 9.45am.

A bus is available. Put your name on the bus list tonight or phone me on 433 916. □

PROGRAM CHANGES

General Meeting . . .

David Cameron who was scheduled for the October meeting apologises for not being able to speak next month; his studies prevent it. We are hoping to find a suitable date in next year's program. A speaker from Environment Victoria has been on our list for some time and we thank Patrick O'Leary for stepping in at short notice.

Plant Group . . .

The guest speaker at the October Plant Group meeting will now be Debra Whitall - Conservation: An American Perspective.

Bird Group . . .

See the last two paragraphs in Barry Lingham's report on page 2.

See what fun it is being a program co-ordinator. □

BIRD GROUP REPORT
. . . Barry Lingham

August 27th 1996

Our guest speaker for the meeting was Sean Pywell. Sean is currently studying at Monash University and his talk was entitled "Moorhens and Other things"

Sean began by making some observations on the mating patterns of those strange animals, *Homo sapiens.* Although we live in a society which is basically monogamous (one male to one female), throughout history and in other cultures various other types of mating patterns have evolved to suit the conditions prevailing.

Certain African tribes still practice polygamy (more than one female to one male). This system has the benefit to the male of allowing him to produce a maximum number of offspring, after consideration of the amount of mouths he is able to provide for! Females tend to favour richer mates or good hunters, thus maximising the chance of survival of their offspring. A woman may have a better chance of survival with a rich man who already has several wives than with a poorer single man.

Polyandry (one woman with several husbands) is a rare occurrence amongst humans, but it is common in some Tibetan tribes where the very limited available arable land means that many single men could not support a family on their plot. By pooling resources, two men can use their land to raise one family. Often the two men are brothers. This means that although one male is not necessarily sure that any offspring belong to him, the progeny will be closely related genetically to him.

Amongst birds, many variations in mating patterns exist. About 90% of the world's birds are monogamous. About 3% are polygynous (this includes birds such as Reed Warblers and some other territorial birds where the female will nest in a good territory presided over by one male. Other females may also be nesting within this territory.

About 6% of bird species are promiscuous, where both males and females will mate with several other birds. Typical of these birds are the Birds of Paradise, where a female will mate with the most colourful male. Certain tribes from Western Africa have a custom where the men dress in the most colourful costumes they can, paint their faces and wear jewellery to attract a wife at an annual festival. The next year, the women can choose a different partner at the festival.

A very small number of birds (about 12 species worldwide) practice polygyndry where a communal group form mating bonds. The Dusky Moorhen is one of these species, along with certain Woodpeckers and Trumpeters.

Sean has been studying the moorhens at Jell's Park for over five years, noting their breeding habits. Moorhens usually nest in reed beds but they may use small mud islands or logs. Their mating is quite conspicuous, involving the male chasing the female as a preliminary to copulation. This allowed Sean to easily note copulation frequency and the birds involved.

From a genes viewpoint, males of all species tend to try to maximise the chance of producing their own offspring. Sean statistically analysed the mating patterns to try to find any general patterns that could help to explain how a male would try to gain any advantage over other males within the group.

Moorhen breeding group sizes vary. Some birds form monogamous pairs. Polygynous groups with male to female ratios of 1:2 are common as are polyandrous groups with male to female ratios of 2:3, or 4:1. Groups practising polygndry with ratios of 2:2 or 3:2 are somewhat less common.

Sean tested such variables as:

- the number of copulations by particular male and female
- the copulations per female during the egg laying period
- and the total number of copulations per male.

Some patterns emerged from this study, but many other questions remain unanswered such as what specific benefit is there to the moorhens in forming these unusual breeding groups.
Sean showed us the mysteries that are still to be solved in relation to one or more common and easily observed birds. Please consider their interesting ways when you next visit your favourite wetland.

Please note the change in our program for next month's speaker. Unfortunately Roger Hicks has not yet been able to retrieve his collection of slides on the "Birds of Chile" from Israel.

Instead, Trevor Pescott has offered to give us information about " PJ Wood - Birds of Geelong 1945-58". This is an opportune time to hear this talk, as Trevor has just released his latest book "Geelong's Birds in Retrospect" dealing with the contributions to the knowledge of local birds made by PJ Wood through his column in the Geelong Advertiser during a 13 year period. (see Ray Baverstock to purchase a copy at a discount price!)

□

FROG EVENING AT THE MELBOURNE ZOO.
. . . Dennis Greenwell

I recently approached the Victorian Frog Group, to ask if a number of our members might attend one of their meetings, to see what went on.

I received an invitation, to be extended to anyone who might like to attend their next meeting night, which is this **Friday, 6th September**

To allow for extra seating, I need to let the organisers know the number of people who may be attending, so will anyone interested please let me know as soon as possible.

In line with good conservation practices, car pooling is strongly recommended.

Please ring me on 437 047.

□

BIODIVERSITY GROUP
. . .Ade Foster

Excursion, Inverleigh Common 11/8/96.

Members met at the Fyansford Hotel carpark at 9.30 on a fine and sunny Sunday morning; a very pleasant change from the weather of the past two weeks, which had been inordinately cold and wet. A very brisk breeze was blowing from the north-west on our arrival at Inverleigh.

Some months ago, using old railway sleepers, members constructed artificial nesting logs for coconut ants, the symbiont host of our club emblem, the Small Ant Blue butterfly, *Acrodipsas myrmecophila*. These were modelled on those used successfully by Tim New and others in their search for the SAAB at Mt. Piper, (See Biodiversity Note 2, October 1995, compiled by Les Barrow) and placed beside active nests in the hope that they would be colonised by the ants. They could then be easily opened and examined for any sign of SABB larvae, and resealed without permanently upsetting the tenants.

One nest was inhabited by a range of cockroaches and an impressive Black House Spider, but no ants. The other had been colonised, but had become very wet and it's continued habitation was in doubt. Both were moved slightly to allow for better run-off of rain water, and re-sealed. No sign of the Small Ant Blue.

A puddle beside the dam on the golf-course was swarming with newly hatched tadpoles and masses of frog-spawn. Because it was very shallow, we doubted that it would survive to allow the tadpoles to mature. The spawn and as many tadpoles as possible were collected and transferred to the dam itself. (Dennis returned the following week to retrieve a net inadvertently left behind and the puddle was dry! A timely intervention indeed.)

Having done our bit for the frog population of the area, we turned our attention to the area surrounding the dam. We uncovered Southern Brown Tree Frog, a very large Spotted Marsh Frog, (with very few spots and no diagnostic stripe) and several specimens of the Common Froglet. These last took some time to identify satisfactorily as they appeared to be two different species; the larger ones were all quite strikingly marked on the dorsal surface, the smaller ones were a plain olive brown. The marbled belly gave a clue as to their species, and when several mating pairs were netted from the dam, it was obvious that the larger brighter ones were females, ardently pursued by the smaller duller males. (Young Jarrod was nick-named *Amplexus interruptus* for his netting prowess.)

Small Tenebrionid beetles were very common under fallen timber throughout the Common. These were particularly notable for their absence on our last visit. Though we searched diligently for orchids, it was not until late in the day that we came across a large patch of Common Greenhoods in flower. A small patch of half a dozen Helmeted orchids were the only others we found.

Bio-diversity Workshop 28/8/96

The last meeting of the Bio-diversity group was again very well attended. The group looked at the invertebrates inhabiting several samples of water from Jerringot. This was a very productive evening ... over 20 different animals were recorded, and a list of freshwater invertebrates being compiled by the group had two new specimens added to it. We also spent some time keying and identifying ants and spiders as part of an on-going study that the group is undertaking.

Some of our members will be attending the next meeting of the former Frogwatch group at Melbourne Zoo on Friday 6th September. Anyone interested in attending can contact Dennis Greenwell or meet at the Elliott Avenue entrance to the Zoo at 7.45 pm.

The topic at the next meeting will be Reptiles and Amphibians with guest speaker Neil Davie, President of the Geelong Herpetological Society. Our next excursion is to Gum Flat at Anglesea. Meet at the corner of Anglesea and Forest Roads at 9.30 am on Sunday September 8th.

Anyone interested in joining the Biodiversity group can contact convener Les Barrow on 430 061 or Dennis Greenwell on 437 047.

□

COMBINED VFNCA / WVFNCA CAMPOUT NOTICE
. . . Dick Southcombe

October 18-20.
Hosted by Casterton FNC.

Where: On the Glenelg River at Myaring Reserve which is 6km west of Pieracle on the Casterton - Dartmoor Road. Refer RACV South Western Victoria map. About 400m before the river turn left on to a track into the reserve.

Directional signs will be erected to show the route from Casterton. Tank water and toilets at reserve.

Program: Casterton FNC members will be at camp from 6pm-9pm Friday to welcome visitors.

Excursions commence 10.00 am Saturday to some wonderful plant and bird areas looking mainly for orchids and Red-tailed Cockatoo.

During the evening we will be treated to dinner at the Bluff and a talk about the limestone cliff formations next door to our camp.

We will search for fossils on Sunday morning and enjoy a barbeque lunch provided by our hosts before heading homewards. As the Bluff is only a few kilometres from our camp site those who find the Glenelg River water too cold may take a hot shower at the Bluff. BYO everything except Saturday dinner and Sunday lunch.

Cost: The campout fee of $30 covers Saturday dinner, Sunday lunch and other charges met by Casterton FNC.

Please send your cheque direct to Ms Carol McKinnon, RMB1108, Casterton, 3311 by **10th October.**

Other accommodation: Hotels and motels in Casterton. Phone numbers available.
No on-site vans at Casterton.
BE EARLY.

Further information: See me at meetings or phone 433 916.

□

EXCURSION REPORT
. . . Diana Primrose

Report on Lerderderg Excursion - August 18th 1996.

This was more a bush walking day than an intensive natural history exercise - weather forecast, rain, hail and snow showers. We were not disappointed!

Eleven of us made the journey. We started the day in fine conditions travelling in the mini bus through Anakie, Staughton Vale and Bacchus Marsh - a scenic run within view of the Rowsley Scarp all the way. Golden wattle *Acacia pycnantha* in flower along the way.

Our target for the day was Chadwick Track and Mckenzie Track, down to the Lerderderg River. Leaving the vehicle in Loh Lane at the base of Mt. Blackwood, we made our way through wet soggy muddy farmland to the start of the track - signified by a blaze on a tree. You have to know where to look!

The track, originally well formed and probably a main packhorse track to the gold diggings (or sluicings), follows the ridge through heathy scrubby woodland, before dropping down to the river where vegetation is more "otways like".
Along the river...
Blackwoods *Acacia melanoxylon,*
Hazel Pomaderris *P.apetala,*
Hop Goodenias *G. ovata,*
Hedge Wattle *Acacia paradoxa*
Swamp Bottlebrush *Callistemon paludosus.*
An introduced species of broom and gorse were also on the river flat.

Along the ridge were beautiful stretches of pink and white Common Heath *Epacris impressa,* the gold of Spike Wattle *Ac. oxycedrus,* with a scatter of pink and white Silky Hakea *H. sericea* and the occasional stunted Silver Banksia *B. marginata.*

Not to be forgotten were the long stretches of a rogue species of shrub which covers the tracks and smothers the normal vegetation. This species proliferated after the 1983 fires and has changed the nature of the Lerderderg bush.

As we made our way down the ridge we had some nice views across the gorge and down the side gullies. At one point there is a birds eye view of a stretch of the river heading straight towards us before taking a sharp horseshoe bend just below, to curve around to our lunch spot on the flat at the bottom of McKenzie track. The drop to the river from this view is quite precipitous.

Twenty-three bird species were seen between Geelong and the gorge. A highlight of the day was the 30+ Flame Robins at the base of Mt. Blackwood. Flame coloured breasts perched on rocks, fences and scattered over the paddock as far as the eye could see! A beautiful sight. Most probably a migrating flock which happened to pause at Mt. Blackwood the same day we did.

Another highlight of the day was the scene of our little band of walkers on the trail through a haze of pink and white heath and yellow wattle with the snow flakes floating down and settling on us. What a beautiful picture - and I had left my camera at home. A short time before this a shower of hail came down and bounced straight off us - so frozen it did not wet us!

An enjoyable day getting to know the "Lerdy" in all its weathers.

*(Note: Botanical names mentioned are what **used** to be - some have been changed - check your updated lists)*

□

HOODED PLOVERS

I believe there is a count on the weekend of **Nov 9-10.**

Barry Lingham will clarify this in the next issue.

□

LERDERDERG EXCURSION BIRD LIST

. . . compiled by Barry Lingham

Species seen between Geelong and Lerderderg Gorge

Little Black Cormorant
White-faced Heron
Straw-necked Ibis
Maned Duck
Wedge-tailed Eagle
Australian Kestrel
Silver Gull
Common Bronzewing
Galah
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Crimson Rosella
Laughing Kookaburra
Welcome Swallow
Richards Pipit
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Blackbird
Flame Robin 30+
Scarlet Robin
Eastern Yellow Robin
Grey Shrike-thrush
Willie Wagtail
Superb Fairy Wren
White-browed Scrub Wren
Brown Thornbill
Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Striated Thornbill
Varied Sitella
White-throated Treecreeper
Red Wattlebird
Yellow-faced Honeyeater
White-eared Honeyeater
White-naped Honeyeater
New Holland Honeyeater
Eastern Spinebill
White-fronted Chat
Striated Pardalote
European Goldfinch
House Sparrow
Common Mynah (Bacchus Marsh)
Australian Magpie-lark
Australian Magpie
Grey Currawong
Little Raven

43 species in all.

□

BELMONT COMMON, A WATER SPORTS COMPLEX AND YOU !

. . . Valda Dedman
Dick Southcombe

The Club has had two meetings with representatives of the City of Greater Geelong to discuss the proposed International Water Sports Complex on Belmont Common. The Victorian government has given a grant of $52,500 and the Council has added thousands more dollars towards a feasibility study. The Club was concerned because no detailed plans for the complex were available and there had been no real opportunity for comment. As lessees of the Jerringot Wildlife Reserve, an integral part of the Common, we believed this was our due. Finally, after many inquiries, we found that our lease had not been renewed, although we had carried out all the terms of our lease and had been involved with, and improved and protected the area since 1972. In 1992 the Club negotiated with the City of South Barwon and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to include the wetland north of Golf Course Road in the Wildlife Reserve and a three year lease was drawn up.

In our meeting with Council we were hoping to find out more details about the project. We were amazed to learn that the substantial grants had been made with very little information about the requirements of international water sports. Four straight lines drawn across an aerial photo, with no details as to size, site requirements, infrastructure or international standards gave us no understanding at all as to what is envisaged. It is impossible to comment without sufficient knowledge. It is also a matter for concern that Councillors appear to have been so influenced by the lobbying and talking up by the proponents - albeit with inadequate factual data - that general acceptance is assumed. This is regrettable especially as there was no community consultation. Thankfully things have now changed. There is now to be extensive community consultation.

We have been told that it is unlikely that "our" wetland would be detrimentally affected, since the proposed course does not directly lie across it. and that Jerringot is "seen as providing a significant and complementary element for the Watersports complex as a wetland environment". There are of course implications for the water table and the use of the area by Latham's Snipe and other birds in any development of the Common as well as questions of salinity, pollution and the like. We feel that the real question should be "Would a Watersports Complex complement the Jerringot Wildlife Reserve?" Would it enhance the Belmont Common as an area where Geelong citizens can stroll and relax? The area is worthy of protection; centrally situated and available to everyone, it is common Crown land.

Our vision is even wider. As field naturalists we understand that Jerringot is part of a larger environmental unit, firstly of the whole of the Belmont Common, then as part of the Barwon River floodplain, and this in turn is linked to the total river catchment and in particular to the system of wetlands leading through Reedy Lake, Hospital Lake, Lake Connewarre, the Barwon delta and the sea. And we also see the importance of the Common as an urban park, a green heart to the city.

We have a vision for the Belmont Common, not just for Jerringot, and we are preparing a concept plan to present to Council. The area has been dear to our hearts for a long time. We have planted trees and shrubs there; we have built a bird hide; we have conducted surveys of its flora and fauna; we have published a brochure about it; we have held bird walks there for our members, other environment and education groups, disabled persons, scouting groups and the general public; we have provided information and practical assistance to students. We want the Common to remain accessible to all and to enhance its environmental values and natural appeal.

We need YOUR input, too. Please let us have all your ideas. The Common, reserved in 1839, could be a jewel in the crown of Geelong.

□

CLUB NOTES
. . . Claire McCormick

Valda Dedman, Dick Southcombe and Trevor Pescott are looking closely at the issue of Belmont Common and its future uses. Please see the report elsewhere in this month's issue.

Rachel Keary and Barry Lingham have submitted our response to the draft recommendations of the Land Conservation Council - Marine and Coastal Areas. Thank you both Rachel and Barry.

Barry Lingham reported that there are still in excess of 22 domestic geese at Balyang Sanctuary.

Valda Dedman has offered to represent the Club on the Barwon River Users Group (RUG). This group will meet about four times a year "to provide Barwon Water with the opportunity to remain responsive to customer needs and concerns." We were asked to nominate one person to represent both Geelong Environment Council and us. Valda and Tony Woolford were interviewed by Barwon Water. They will choose one person to represent both organisations. The G.E.C.and G.F.N.C. feel that we should ***both*** have representatives.

The Club plans to reprint the very successful 'GEELONG NATURE GUIDE'. We have received a Grant of $400.00 from Surf Coast Shire Council to start the ball rolling and we are also seeking further funding from other sources.

Concern has been raised as to the continued suitability of the Small Ant Blue Butterfly as our Club emblem. The butterfly appears to now be extinct in this region. This is very sad, as I know how hard members have worked to preserve its former habitat at the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve. Your feelings on the matter would be appreciated.

The final Seminar by COAST ACTION will be held tomorrow night, **Wednesday 4th September**. The subject will be "Coastal Animals" and the speaker is **Barbara Wilson**. The meeting begins at 8.00 p.m. at the Geelong West Town Hall.

□

SPRING IN GEELONG

. . . . by Joe Hubbard
and his special helpers

The proponents of the six season cycle of nature will tell you Spring is already here. But this old conservative waits until September 1 to celebrate its coming. Whatever you believe everyone with our interests looks forward to the bounty of the next few months. And what a bounty!

It is such a special time that we have asked some of our members to share with us their Spring thoughts with the usual emphasis on what and where.

Valda Dedman . . .

Valda is another fan of the Brisbane Ranges and its wattles and is looking forward to sharing this bounty with a lot of friends.

She also recommends Forest Road and Gum Flat Road, Anglesea for more wattle viewing.

The swans at Jerringot Nature Reserve should have cygnets by now. She will check on their progress.

Spring brings the pleasure (?) of being awakened by the dawn chorus of the birds.

And the colonies of greenhoods everywhere.

Gordon McCarthy. . .

Gordon feels that September brings an awakening of nature. He looks for the first orchids flowering and the song of the birds and their mating and territorial behaviours.

"Yesterday, you could feel spring in the warm wind - there is something intangible about the prospect about the approach of spring - you feel it, smell it, sense it. You feel as though you have turned the corner. Every thing starts to feel better."

Gordon feels that spring starts in August when he finds the first Scented Sundew in flower.

Carleen Huggins . . .

This marks the beginning of the spring orchids. Carleen looks out for Blunt Greenhoods, Maroonhoods and the first of the Caledenias. She likes Forest Road, Anglesea.

She also will take a drive down Purnell Street, Anglesea stopping off at the Bowman Reserve where there will sure to be something of interest. At the end of this street there is a lovely walk across to the cliff tops.

Trevor Pescott . . .

The remarkable changes that occur in nature as August ticks over into September never fail to excite - more than at any other time of the year. It is a season of awakening. It is still too cold though to visit forests, wetlands and shores, so as a nature photographer I head out to open woodlands at the You Yangs, Inverleigh and the Brisbane Ranges.

Birds have started nesting and wildflowers are in profusion. Wattlebirds, New Hollands, chats, pardalotes and robins will be busy at their nests; and ravens, lapwings, magpies, kites and even wedgetails may already have young.

Anglesea too is worth visiting, but not yet the "Otways".

Leila Ramsay . . .

"The burst of colour of the wattles makes you feel so much better - the gold against the green of the bush. For a variety of wattles e.g. Spike, Rough, Golden, you can't do better than the Brisbane Ranges. Thompsons Road and Aeroplane Road are recommended". (Access from south end of National Park via Switch Road or from the north via Mt Wallace Road off the Geelong-Ballan Road.)

"A drive along the Geelong-Ballan Road is a treat in itself. Don't forget the beautiful Fairy Wax-flower on the right hand side of De Motts Road, Anakie, just over Clarkes Road". It grows roadside and spills over into private property.

Joe Hubbard. . .

I guess my first trip this Spring will be to the Brisbane Ranges and the stony, dry hillsides around the Stony Creek picnic ground (via Anakie) to look for Pink Fingers orchids.

If I am lucky I will find growing in close proximity to each other, pink and white Pink Fingers and the lovely Blue Caladenia.

Pushing my luck I will continue to the Bert Boardman Reserve at Steiglitz and take the gravel road through it towards the creek. There I will find lovely mauve-blue Waxlip Orchids backed by the yellow of Guinea Flowers.

□

AUGUST MEETING REPORT
. . .Roy Whiteside

Report of illustrated talk entitled "Protecting Geelong's Environment" given by Tony Robinson at the General Meeting held on 6 August 1996.

Tony Robinson, a chemical engineer, is a Manager in the S.W. Region of the Environment Protection Authority. He stated that the aims of the EPA are to monitor the quality of air, water and land and to ensure that pollution levels are kept below acceptable values.

The EPA tries to encourage the local community to deal directly with a company whose practices are of concern.

The talk was illustrated with maps and aerial photographs were shown of the local area.

The positions of EPA monitoring stations were shown at S.Geelong, Corio and Point Henry.

The EPA liaises with other agencies, eg. The Catchment and Land Protection Authority.

Water quality in this region is under the control of Barwon Water in conjuction with the EPA.

Tony stressed the importance of community involvement with companies together with the EPA and gave a number of examples:

1 The EPA is working with Rohm and Haas in conjunction with the community at Pt Henry in an attempt to retain remnant vegetation. Waste water (containing paint) had previously been discharged into a pond. The EPA advised that this practice was unacceptable. It is now planned to filter out the paint and to make use of the waste water to irrigate a rehabilitated area of remnant vegetation.

2 Discussions are taking place with Alcoa with regard to the discharge of waste water of low salt content. The EPA advises it is preferable to discharge onto a land area with recreated habitat rather than straight into the bay. It has suggested that higher stacks would lower the fluoride level close to ground level.

3 The Geelong Cement Company is shortly to produce an environment improvement plan which has been drawn up by the company in conjunction with the EPA, council and local residents. The main concerns being addressed are with regard to cement dust and discharges into the river from the quarry operation.

4 The Shell Company of Australia has a similar environmental improvement scheme.

EPA Publications Catalogue

This gives a summary of all publications produced by the EPA. With the major areas being air, waste, greenhouse-effect, ozone layer, industry, policies, technical guidelines. Videos are also available.

The talk created a great deal of interest from the audience who asked a wide range of questions. Major concerns were expressed with regard to discharges from the Shell Refinery into the atmosphere and Corio Bay. The major concerns were the odours from the waste water treatment plant, the increased temperature of the bay from cooling water and visible smoke plumes.

Roy Whiteside gave a vote of thanks to the speaker.

□

JERRINGOT, FROGS AND SNIPE
. . . Dennis Greenwell

On 7th August, I was at the wetland with two other members looking for frogs. As expected, we were able to find a dozen or more Spotted Marsh Frogs under some carpet alongside the cycle track. They exhibited a wide variation of colour and pattern and many were very fat, which I concluded, was due to spawn. We were also able to find a single specimen of Ewing's Tree Frog in the same place. Although many Common Froglets could be heard calling from the edge of the swamp, we were unable to find any.

While we were busy with our frog hunting, a rather "useful" thing happened. A car travelling along the Barwon Heads Road, backfired. This had the effect of making all the birds that had been peacefully going about their business, take to the air in panic. I knew that at any day, the Latham's Snipe would be returning from their Northern Hemisphere breeding grounds and I took particular notice of the birds in the air, to see if any Latham's Snipe were amongst them. However, none could be seen.

On 13th August, Ade Foster and I were at the Bird Hide carrying out our routine water testing for Barwon Water. When we had completed our tests, we decided to have a walk through the edge of the swamp to see if any Snipe had arrived in the week since the "Frog hunting" day.

To our immense satisfaction, 15 Latham's Snipe took to the air almost at once. Although it was very tempting to continue with our walk to try to discover how many more birds had arrived, we thought that they should be left in peace to recover from their long flight back to Australia.

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LIBRARY NOTES
. . . Betty Moore

Wingspan Vol 6 No 2 (RAOU) - This issue contains a special supplement, RAOU Conservation Statement No 10. "Conserving Woodland Birds in the Wheat and Sheep Belts of Southern Australia". Temperate woodlands are the most threatened type of wooded ecosystems in Australia and because of destruction and alteration they now contain a very high number of threatened plants and animals, including many birds.

"The Quest for the Perfect Hollow". George Appleby, co-ordinator for an RAOU Birds and Tree Hollows Survey in northern Victoria, outlines current and potential problems faced by hollow-nesting birds in this area.

The Bird Observer No 765.
Attention is drawn to a new BOC conservation program on behalf of the Bush Stone-curlew and Beach Stone-curlew, Australia's two stone-curlews, both of which are nationally vulnerable.

"Tailings Dams", an article by Paul Ryan and Bob Shanks tells of bird fatalities caused by the cyanide in gold mine tailings dams. Many of these mines render the local birds particularly vulnerable with water in short supply.

Our library has a Directory of Community of Environmental Monitoring groups in Australia. This interesting publication has been put out by the ACF. It is the culmination of a project begun in 1994 and provides an overview of CEM efforts around Australia. It details over 200 individual or networked groups, summarising the efforts of about 200,000 volunteers. It covers all aspects of ecological monitoring, urban, farmlands, arid lands, parks, reserves, rivers, streams, lakes etc.

A useful book for when one wishes to know who is doing what, where and when - and yes, GFNC is mentioned.

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A NATIONAL SURVEY OF AUSTRALIA'S BIRDS OF PREY

The RAOU and the Australasian Raptor's Association conducted a survey of raptors between 1986-90.

The release of the rabbit calicivirus may affect the numbers of raptors and finance to repeat this survey has been granted.

Volunteers are needed who will record sightings whilst driving along rural roads. If you think you can help, contact William Steele at the RAOU, 415 Riversdale Road, East Hawthorn 3123 or phone: 03 - 9882 2677.

VISIT FROM THE LATROBE VALLEY FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB.

The LVFNC is holding a campout at the Avalon Conference Centre (near Limeburner's Lagoon) on the weekend of **October 12/13th.** They will visit the Werribee Treatment Plant on the Sunday. Some of our members will be guiding the visitors and other GFNC members who wish to come along will be welcome. Some people may also wish to renew old acquaintances on the Saturday evening Contact Barry Lingham (Ph 554 291) for more details.

ITEMS FOR THE FUNDRAISER

Each month Ray Baverstock holds a fundraiser that helps to stretch our GFNC budget a little further. We would appreciate any donations of books or other goods that could be used for the fundraiser. Please contact Ray if you can help out.

FRIENDS OF EDWARDS POINT

Edwards Point is one of several reserves on the Bellarine Peninsular. It is an important wader roost and still has many interesting plants (such as the Wirilda *Acacia retinodes*) amongst the weeds. This magnificent but badly neglected area that juts into Swan Bay certainly needs some extra friends and anyone who is interested in helping the formation of the Friends of Edwards Point group should contact Madeline Glynn (ph 486 332)

RAOU BIRD SURVEY CAMP
Stuart Mill - November 16/17 1996

This camp will be based on the property of Rob Youl, a Landcare Education Officer with the Dept. NRE, at Dalyenong, east of Stuart Mill and approximately 75 Km west of Bendigo.

This fascinating area contains some unusual heathy and herb rich woodlands in addition to Box-Ironbark forest. Some important reserves, Dalyenong Flora and Fauna Reserve, Kara Kara State Park and the hilly St Arnaud State Forest are nearby.

Some of the birds that have been found in the area include Powerful Owl, Black Honeyeater, Bush Stone-curlew and Musk Lorikeet. There are likely to be some nocturnal animals such as gliders and possibly Tuans.

The aim of the camp is to combine some surveys for RAOU's Birds and Tree Hollows project with general birding and walking.

Contact Margaret Cameron (ph 299792) if you are interested in joining with some other GFNC members who are attending this camp.

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Crested Shrike-tit . . .

Peter Hackett saw one at Queen's Park in July for his first time.

During the past three years it has been seen here five times :
May by Jo Chadwick
" " Ira Savage
July by Rosemary Atkins
October by Judy Rowe.

All the observers expressed surprise at seeing the bird but when you add up the sightings, the bird is not so rare. Perhaps we should make a point to look out for it. Once you have seen its striking colours in the sunlight you will not forget it.

□

FROM MY KITCHEN WINDOW - A BIRD LIST FOR JUNE 1996

. . . Valda Dedman

At Joe Hubbard's suggestion, I kept a note of birds visiting my Highton garden during June. A pen and an old diary on the kitchen bench prompted me to jot down species as I heard or saw them. Nineteen species were recorded and although nothing particularly unusual turned up, a pattern emerged of residents and casuals, that to some extent matched sightings made by members of the Bird Group over the same period.

Magpie }
Red Wattlebird } Seen every day. Resident. Noisy.
New Holland Honeyeater }
Blackbird 14/6 onwards. Becoming more evident, calling early in morning and at dusk.
Little Raven 1 or 2 seen most days. 9/6 (10); 11/6 (40, flying, calling settling in trees); 16/6 (6)
Pied Currawong Very vocal. 1/6 (12 flying high to west); 10/6, 15/6 early & 10+ at 1130 hrs); 16/6 (1 dead on road 0730 hrs); 19/6 (flying to west); 21/6, 24/6
Crimson Rosella Most days. Small flocks up to 6. 1/6; 10/6; 18/6; 20/6; 21/6; 22/6; 24/6; 28/6
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo 7/6; 19/6; 27/6
Rainbow Lorikeet Generally flying west in morning, east in evening. 7/6; 10/6 (10+ flying west 1030 hrs); 11/6; 26/6
Welcome Swallow 1/6
Australian Magpie Lark 1/6; 21/6
Spotted Turtle-Dove 8/6; 12/6; 15/6
Spotted Pardalote Calling 20/6; 24/6; 25/6
Common Starling Not evident earlier, though probably resident (nested 1995). 18/6; 20/6; 26/6
Willie Wagtail 18/6; 20/6
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo 14/6 (2 calling as flew to west)
Song Thrush 20/6 (1 on ground, landed on fence, flew next door)
Masked Lapwing Calling as flew over 15/6, 19/6, 26/6
Mistletoebird Female, perched in tall *Agonis flexuosa*, calling 20/6

GIPSY POINT LODGE

Situated at the head of beautiful Mallacoota Inlet and surrounded by Croajingalong National Park, the Lodge provides a relaxing comfortable base from which to explore a unique, unspoiled area rich in bird life, flora and fauna. Package holidays for bird observers and field naturalists. Other activities include fishing, boating, swimming, surfing and bushwalking.

First class, all inclusive accommodation in the Lodge or self-contained cottages.

For further details contact
Alan and Susan Robertson
Gipsy Point Lodge
Gipsy Point, Victoria, 3891, Australia
Freecall 1800 063 556
Fax: (051) 58 8225 (From Nov. '96 (03) 5158 8225)
Int'l: +61 51 58 8205 (From Nov. '96 +61 35158 8205)

ANOTHER KIND OF SPRING
. . .Alban Lloyd-Jones

The start of Spring in the alps finds the land under a thick cover of 1-2 metres of snow, a few places have ten metre drifts. This is light snow with sharp crystalline structure, easy to make turns on skis. All the streams are under the snow, no flowers are to be seen and there is very little bird life. Blizzards and icy winds are still the order of the day and extreme caution is necessary.

As the days become warmer the grey skies turn to a lovely blue, contrasting with the snow which now has a rounded crystalline structure. This is the stuff which breaks legs and tears ligaments. The snow is heavy and locks your foot while your leg rotates. Ugh!

One starts to hear the streams running out of sight under the snow. In a very few areas the lovely Marsh Marigold will appear. Its flowers are fully formed and open under the snow and as the stronger sun melts away some of it these treasures appear. The occasional wombat tracks will be seen and many of the tracks of smaller animals as they have scurried from the base of one tree to another. They are starting to come out of their insulated underground tunnels which have kept them alive through the winter.

As the melting process continues the water flow increases in the streams until some of them become torrents. As you cross them, one wonders how thick is the snow underneath.

In a few places the branches of the snowgums are touching the ground under the weight of solid blocks of ice. No tall timbers here.

The Spring light makes everything look fresh and new. Like the Autumn, it is an artist's delight. The colours are brighter with intense black shadows contrasting with the snow and a range of reds and oranges on the trunks of snowgums.

One of the greatest sights is the Flame Robins as they hop around on the snow looking for the returning insects.

Later in the spring there will be many mosquitoes on the snow but they are very sluggish and do not bite us.

The ice is melting on the large dam now but some foolish people still try to take short cuts instead of going around the edge. The sun may have sent the temperature up eight or ten degrees but that water is very cold.

With the warmer weather comes the children. Their laughter as they race past at high speed and then their screams of delight as they fall full-frontal in the snow brings a smile to the older skiers.

Little ones are enduring their first unsteady morning and if they can travel ten metres without falling they think they have done well.

Vegetation starts to appear in late September and you can often find a patch of green under the trees for lunch. We no longer have to sit in the trees or on some cold rock.

Large patches of the snow take on an orange hue as the melt continues. Parts of the streams can now be seen, sometimes at the bottom of a two metre hole, more traps for the unwary.

All the north facing slopes are losing their snow now so we have to use the slopes which receive little or no sunlight. This snow is incredibly heavy and one has to be careful. Access to and from these areas is becoming difficult as the snow is leaving.

The nights are still at or near freezing as we camp out in the snow so we are well rugged up but as we move around during the day with heavy rucksacks it seems very hot as we take off clothing.

The wildflowers are not yet out. The ground is still cold and saturated but Spring has taken hold of the high plains and will continue its preparatory work before handing over to Summer when we will once again be treated to the alpine flowers.

□

MORE MARINE ACTION

Marine Issues Discussion

7.30p.m. Thursday 12th September
Anglesea Hotel.

"Shellfish Legislation and Poaching"
Peter Murphy
"Over Collection" Tim Allen

Regional Coastal Boards (RCB's)

RCB's have been appointed. The boundary between the Central Coast RCB and the Western Coast RCB is Thompsons Creek, Breamlea.

Geelong Co-ordinator:
Russell Irving: 264 669
PO Box 103, Geelong 3220.

Surf Coast Co-ordinator
Sharon Hinton 891 732
86 Polworth Road Lorne, 3232

□

ANGAIR WILDFLOWER SHOW

To be held at:
Anglesea Hall
McMillan Street
Anglesea

Saturday Sep 21st, 10.00 - 5.30
Sunday Sep 22nd, 10.00 - 5.00

Also:
Art Show
Plant Sales
Craft Stalls
Snacks
Guided Walks
Children's Section

Keeping an eye on junior. . .

Claire McCormick saw an immature Golden Whistler at her home in Belmont.

The following day Lorraine Preston saw one from her home near Torquay Road.

If it was the same bird, it was travelling almost exactly south-east.

□

BIRD OBSERVATION REPORTS — *compiled by Barry Lingham*

Observations were submitted by Ray Baverstock (RBa), Barry Lingham (BL), Ron Mole (RMo), Gordon McCarthy (GMc), DK Coltman (DKC), Bjanke & Jarrod Duim (B&JD), Ade Foster (AF), Valda Dedman (VWD), Tim Tarr (TT), Dick Southcombe (DS).

Australian Gannet	1	14.8.96	Torquay	GMc
	800+	24.7.96	St Leonards	AF
Darter	1	15.8.96	Queen's Park Bridge	DKC
Cattle Egret	50+	22.8.96	Belmont	RBa
	100+	24.8.96	Ceres	RBa
Pacific Black Duck	3	14.8.96	Highton	RBa
Black-shouldered Kite	1	2.8.96	Balyang	B&JD
Black Kite	3	31.7.96	Maltby Bypass	RBu
	1	17.8.96	Maltby Bypass	BL
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	23.8.96	Cobbledicks Ford	RBu
Australian Kestrel	1	17.8.96	Highton	RBa
Buff-banded Rail	1	27.7.96	Jerringot	GMc
Masked Lapwing	6	22.8.96	Highton	RBa
Black-fronted Plover	2	4.8.96	Jerringot	B&JD
	2	3.8.96	Balyang	B&JD
Avocet	300+	27.7.96	Moolap	GMc
Latham's Snipe *	10	21.8.96	Jerringot (early returns)	VWD
Silver Gull	1	25.8.96	Mannerim (hit power line)	BL
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	8	22.7.96	Newtown	TT
	62	15.6.96	Queen's Park	TT
	20+	19.8.96	Highton	VWD
	30	9.8.96	Newtown	DKC
Galah	7+	23.8.96	Highton (with LB Corella?)	RBa
	10	6.8.96	Belmont (with LB Corella)	DS
Long-billed Corella	1	25.8.96	Highton (with 2 galahs)	RBa
	1	6.8.96	Belmont (with 10 galahs)	DS
Rainbow Lorikeet	2	26.8.96	Werribee	RBu
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	6	4.8.96	Jerringot (escapees?)	B&JD
Crimson Rosella	12+	14.8.96	Torquay	RBa
Red-rumped Parrot	6	27.7.96	Jerringot	GMc
Blue-winged parrot	8	26.8.96	Argoona Rd. Little River	RBu
Tawny Frogmouth	1	20-23.8.96	Highton	RBa
	1	27.8.96	Highton (at last years nest site)	RBa
Singing Bushlark	10+	26.8.96	Argoona Rd. Little River	RBu
Flame Robin	5	9.8.96	Cobbledick's Ford	RBu
	30+	18.8.96	Mt Blackwood (GFNC trip)	BL
Willie Wagtail	2	Daily	Highton	RMo
	1	15.8.96	Highton	RBa
	1	23.8.96	Highton	RBa
Superb Fairy-wren	1	3.8.96	Queen's Park	B&JD
Calamanthus	1	26.8.96	Argoona Rd Little River	RBu
Yellow Thornbill	2	12&24.8.96	Highton	RBa
	1	27.8.96	Highton (dead bird in garden)	RBa
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	4+	14.8.96	Torquay	RBa
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	2	31.7.96	Werribee	RBu
New Holland Honeyeater	12+	22.8.96	Highton	RBa
Spotted Pardalote	2	10.8.96	Highton	RBa
Striated Pardalote	1	10.8.96	Highton	RBa
Silvereye	2	21.8.96	Belmont	RP
	24+	August	Highton	RM
-	20+	24.8.96	Highton	RBa
Red-browed Firetail	80+	25.8.96	Belmont Common Golf Course	DS
Australian Magpie-lark	2	18.8.96	Highton	RBa

* The Latham's Snipe arrive back at Jerringot in August each year. Dennis Greenwell noted some at Jerringot on the 13th of August.

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" "	Dick Southcombe	433 916
" "	Graeme Tribe	552 302
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Geelong Field Naturalists Club Inc.

ROSTER

	LIBRARY	SUPPER	HALL
OCTOBER	Rachel Keary	Wilma Tribe Penny Smith	Rohan Bugg Tim Tarr
NOVEMBER	Valerie Lloyd-Jones	Roma Connors Bev McNay	Ian Hunt Ron Mole

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